

Message Text

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15

ACTION NEA-10

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USIA-06 ACDA-05 IO-10 AID-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 SAJ-01

MC-02 /093 W

----- 043890

R 280900Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY SANA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7001

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USCINCEUR

COMIDEASTFOR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANA 3621

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PFOR, YE, SA

SUBJECT: YEMENI/SAUDI RELATIONS

BEGIN SUMMARY: FOREIGN MINISTER ABDULLAH AL-ASNAJ INFORMED ME ON DEC 25 THAT YEMENI/SAUDI RELATIONS ARE NOW MUCH IMPROVED FOLLOWING PRESIDENT HAMDI'S RECENT VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA WITH SAUDIS GIVING FIRM COMMITMENTS TO HAMDI WITH REGARD TO BOTH POLITICAL AND MILITARY SUPPORT. URGE THAT DEPARTMENT FOLLOW UP WITH DOD RE THE IMPACT PACKAGE.
END SUMMARY.

1. DURING DEC 25 MEETING FONMIN ASNAJ TOLD ME THAT PRESIDENT HAMDI'S RECENT VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA WENT VERY WELL AND THAT YEMENI/SAUDI RELATIONS ARE NOW GENERALLY MUCH BETTER THAN BEFORE. ASNAJ SAID THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT WAS THE CLEAR AND UNEQUIVOCAL
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EXPRESSION OF SAG SUPPORT FOR HAMDI. THIS POSITION

WAS CONVEYED BY ALL THE TOP LEADERSHIP OF THE SAUDI

GOVERNMENT INCLUDING KING KHALID AND PRINCES FAHD, SULTAN AND ABDULLAH. (ASNAJ SAID THAT PRINCE ABDULLAH WAS FOR THE FIRST TIME OPENLY AND DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN YEMENI AFFAIRS AND OPINED THAT KING KHALID SEEMS TO BE USING HIM MORE ON THIS MATTER THAN WAS THE CASE WITH KING FAISAL.)

2. ASNAJ CONTINUED THAT THE SAUDIS ALSO MADE IT QUITE EVIDENT TO SHAIKH ABDULLAH AL-AHMAR THAT HE MUST COOPERATE WITH HAMDI AND THAT WHILE THE SAUDIS WOULD CONTINUE THEIR STIPEND TO AHMAR THIS SHOULD NOT BE CONSTRUED AS SAUDI ENCOURAGEMENT TO CAUSE INTERNAL DIFFICULTIES IN YEMEN. ASNAJ SAID THAT AHMAR HAS COME BACK TO YEMEN A "TAMED PERSON" AND ASNAJ EXPRESSED OPTIMISM THAT THE INTERNAL SITUATION IN YEMEN WILL NOW BE STABILIZED. ASNAJ WENT ON THAT IN THIS CONNECTION HE IS ADVISING THE PRESIDENT TO CONSIDER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A "LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL" WHICH WOULD TAKE THE PLACE OF THE FORMER CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY AND WHICH WOULD BE HEADED BY SAHIKH AHMAR. ASNAJ SAID THAT THE PRESIDENT IS GIVING THIS PROPOSAL SERIOUS CONSIDERATION BUT HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT HAMDI WOULD FINALLY DECIDE.

3. ASNAJ SAID THAT DURING THE TALKS WITH PRINCE SULTAN ON THE QUESTION OF ARMS PRESIDENT HAMDI EXPRESSED FORCEFULLY YEMEN'S POSITION POINTING OUT INTER ALIA THAT IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY FIRM SAUDI COMMITMENTS YEMEN COULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO TERMINATE THE ARMS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOVIET UNION WHICH DATES BACK TO THE EARLY DAYS OF THE REPUBLIC. HAMDI ALSO EXPLAINED THAT THUS FAR THE SOVIETS HAVE ONLY AGREED TO PROVIDE ARMS WHICH ARE PRESENTLY IN THE YEMENI INVENTORY AND WHICH WERE REQUESTED SEVERAL YEARS AGO BY THE AL-AYNI GOVERNMENT. HAMDI CONTINUED THAT NEW SOVIET ARMS, HOWEVER, ARE PROMISED ONLY IF HAMDI AGREES TO GO TO MOSCOW WHICH HE WILL NOT DO IF SAUDIS CAN PROVIDE HIM WITH FIRM ALTERNATIVE. HAMDI WENT ON THAT IF THE

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SAUDIS DO NOW WISH HIM TO HAVE THE SOVIET ARMS WHICH HAVE ALREADY BEEN PROMISED HE IS PREPARED TO TRANSFER THEM IMMEDIATELY TO THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT AS A SIGN OF HIS GOOD FAITH. BOTH SULTAN AND CROWN PRINCE FAHD STATED THAT SAUDI ARABIA WILL HONOR ITS ARMS COMMITMENTS TO YEMEN WITH SULTAN INDICATING THAT A SPECIAL SAUDI EMISSARY WILL BE COMING TO YEMEN IN A FEW DAYS, BEARING WITH HIM DOCUMENTS FOR YEMENI SIGNATURE WITH

IMPLEMENTATION TO BEGIN AS SOON AS THESE DOCUMENTS ARE SIGNED. ASNAJ DID NOT KNOW IF THE SAUDIS EXTRACTED FROM HAMDI ANY PROMISES TO TURN OFF THE SOVIETS BUT OPINED THAT THE SAUDIS SEEMED WILLING TO ALLOW THE YEMENIS TO ACCEPT THE "OLD" SOVIET EQUIPMENT AS LONG AS "NEW" SOVIET EQUIPMENT WAS REFUSED. HE STRESSED, HOWEVER, THAT HAMDI DISCUSSED THESE MATTERS WITH SULTAN ALONE AND HAMDI HAS TOLD HIM NOTHING OTHER THAN THE BROAD OUTLINES.

4. ASNAJ SAID THAT IT WAS ALSO DECIDED TO HAVE CLOSER COORDINATION BETWEEN THE SAG AND THE YARG AND BOTH GOVERNMENTS WILL BE HOLDING MORE REGULAR MEETINGS IN THE FUTURE AT ALL LEVELS. ASNAJ SAID THAT IN REPLY TO SAUDI COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE LACK OF INFORMATION IN THE PAST HAMDI EXPRESSED FULL READINESS TO BE FORTHCOMING WITH THE SAUDIS BUT NOTED THAT THIS MUST BE A TWO-WAY PROPOSITION.

5. ASNAJ POINTED OUT SEVERAL TIMES THAT HE WAS NOT PRESENT AT ALL OF THE MEETINGS AND SO WAS NOT PRIVY TO EVERYTHING THAT WAS DISCUSSED. HE INDICATED, HOWEVER, THAT THE SAUDIS HAVE AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO PAY THE SALARIES OF THE 400 SECONDARY AND PRIMARY SCHOOL EGYPTIAN TEACHERS WHOM THE LIBYAN GOVERNMENT HAD EARLIER PROMISED TO SUPPORT WHILE LATER RENEGING. ASNAJ ALSO SAID THAT ON DEC 24 THE SAUDIS PAID THEIR SECOND INSTALLMENT FOR BUDGETARY SUPPORT AMOUNTING TO APPROXIMATELY \$24 MILLION. IN ADDITION ANOTHER \$5 MILLION WAS PAID TO COVER THE OIL DIFFERENTIAL PAYMENTS.

5. ASNAJ CONCLUDED BY EXPRESSING HIS APPRECIATION FOR THE "IMPORTANT US ROLE" IN BRINGING ABOUT THIS ADUDI/YEMENI

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RAPPROACHEMENT. HE SAID THAT AHMAD MAKADAM, A HADHRAMI EMPLOYED BY THE SAG AS TROUBLE SHOOTER, ALSO TOLD HIM THAT THE US GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN VERY ACTIVE IN THIS REGARD.

6. COMMENT: ASNAJ WAS MANIFESTLY PLEASED WITH THE POSITIVE OUTCOME OF THE HAMDI VISIT AND WAS ALSO GENUINELY APPRECIATIVE OF OUR EFFORTS IN BRINGING THIS OUTCOME ABOUT. AS HE HIMSELF STATED, HOWEVER, HE WAS NOT PRESENT AT ALL OF THE MEETINGS AND FOR EXAMPLE IN RESPONSE TO MY PROBING PROFESSED TO HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE OF ANY SAUDI-INSPIRED AGREEMENT BETWEEN HAMDI AND AHMAR. I HAVE ASKED TO SEE HAMDI IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS AND WILL THEN TRY TO PIN DOWN MORE SPECIFICS. THE IMPORTANT THING, HOWEVER, IS THAT IT NOW APPEARS THE

SAUDI/YEMENI MINI-CRISIS HAS BEEN SATISFACTORILY
RESOLVED AND WE ENTER THE NEW YEAR WITH A GOOD CHANCE
TO MOVE FORWARD. IN THIS REGARD I URGE THAT THE DEPARTMENT
NOW FOLLOW UP WITH DOD ON WAYS WE CAN MEET PRINCE
SULTAN'S REQUEST OF ASS'T SECRETARY ATHERTON TO BEEF UP
THE IMPACT PACKAGE BOTH IN TERMS OF TYPES OF EQUIPMENT
AND OF DELIVERIES.
SCOTES

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